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THE SITUATION IN BURUNDI

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-second year

Letter dated 3 November 1997 from the Permanent Representative of the United Republic of Tanzania to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you a statement by the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania on the border incident that took place on 27 October 1997.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 57, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Dauid N. MWAKAWAGO
Ambassador

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ANNEX

Statement by the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania on the situation in Burundi and the incident of 27 October 1997

The Government of the United Republic of Tanzania categorically refutes unfounded allegations levelled against it that Tanzanian forces attacked Burundi on the night of 27 October 1997, causing extensive damage to property and human lives. On the contrary, it was the Burundian army that attacked the Kiteule detachment of the Tanzanian People's Defence Forces situated at Kagunga by light arms in the early morning of 27 October 1997. Being provoked, the Tanzanian forces had to exercise their right of self-defence in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations.

The Government of the United Republic of Tanzania has an obligation to protect its territorial integrity as well as the security of its citizens. In addition, the Government, being a signatory to the international conventions governing refugees, has an obligation to ensure their safety. The conditions generating the exodus of the people of Burundi to neighbouring countries are well known to the international community. In this connection, the internal conflict in Burundi should not be externalized in an attempt to hoodwink the world into believing that there is a conflict between the United Republic of Tanzania and Burundi. The United Republic of Tanzania will not be drawn into a purely internal conflict in Burundi, not even by recent acts of provocation by Burundian armed forces.